

Philadelphia's School-to-Career System

School-to-Career (STC) is a comprehensive initiative, under Children Achieving, to provide all children in Philadelphia public schools with the opportunities, experiences and academic preparation needed for employment and/or post-secondary education upon graduation from high school. Philadelphia's School-to-Career system forges formal partnerships among the school district, employers, post-secondary institutions, labor unions, city government, parents, youth-serving agencies, employer associations, community-based organizations and others. In addition, School-to-Career is a critical part of the regional workforce and economic development strategies. The school district and its partners believe that School-to-Career will build a more highly skilled workforce so that we can attract employers with high wage/high skill jobs to the region.

SCOPE

- ▶ The Philadelphia School District is the nation's fifth largest school system, with 218,000 students in Grades K-12 in 257 schools and 12,400 teachers.
- ▶ Each comprehensive high school has been restructured into Small Learning Communities (SLCs) with approximately 200-400 students each.
- ▶ In 1995, Philadelphia began the process of reorganizing from six large regions into 22 clusters, corresponding to geographic neighborhoods with one comprehensive high school and its feeder middle and elementary schools.
- ▶ Over 90 of the 135 high school SLCs have designated School-to-Career as their instructional framework.
- ▶ Several middle and elementary schools across the district are also forming SLCs and using STC experiences as part of their instructional program.

STRUCTURE

- ▶ A School-to-Career Leadership Council, established in November of 1996 and comprised of 20 corporate CEOs and educational leaders, provides oversight and policy guidance to district-wide STC system-building efforts. The STC Leadership Council is housed at the Greater Philadelphia First Partnership for Reform.
- ▶ Each of the district's 22 clusters is beginning to develop a Cluster Resource Board. Resource Boards are led by an employer and include members from universities, community organizations, parents, students and the school district. Resource Boards support the implementation of School-to-Career at the neighborhood level. Board members are responsible for both securing and leveraging the necessary resources.
- ▶ At the Philadelphia School District, the Office of Education for Employment provides leadership and a set of supporting structures and resources to all participating schools and employers. These include:
 - ▶ Employment Services Unit—Business Relationship Managers recruit employer partners, and serve as a liaison between industry and schools in seven areas, corresponding to local labor market strengths: Business/Finance; Communications; Health; Hospitality; Transportation; Technology; Manufacturing/Printing; Law. Representatives of the Private Industry Council certify students for eligibility in federally-funded programs.
 - ▶ Support Services Unit—Resource Coordinators screen students for interviews, and assist with the training of mentors and development of learning plans.
 - ▶ Data Unit—Data Managers record employer and student information including performance and retention, and conduct formative evaluations and surveys on School-to-Career activities.
- ▶ Some of our partners include: the Chamber of Commerce, Greater Philadelphia First, the Philadelphia High School Academies, Communities in Schools, YouthBuild, the Philadelphia Education Fund/College Access, the Private Industry Council, the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, the Community College of Philadelphia, Drexel University, Bell Atlantic, CIGNA, CoreStates Bank, Independence Blue Cross, Marriott Hotel, PECO, Philadelphia Stock Exchange, Rohm & Haas, St. Christopher's Hospital for Children and Wawa, Inc.

SCHOOL-TO-CAREER AND STANDARDS

The district has adopted a set of high academic standards in all of the core content areas and a set of cross-cutting competencies in problem solving, communication, multiculturalism, technology, citizenship and School-to-Career. School-to-Career Cross-Cutting Competencies include the ability to:

- ▶ effectively plan and organize resources to produce a product or service;
- ▶ work effectively with others and in teams;
- ▶ apply current technology;
- ▶ understand workplace organization;
- ▶ understand career options; and
- ▶ integrate activities outside the classroom with academic learning.

All School-to-Career experiences are designed to help students meet these competencies and the standards in the core academic subjects.

KEY ELEMENTS OF SCHOOL-TO-CAREER

School-to-Career experiences span from the very early grades through post-secondary education. From kindergarten through eighth grade, the focus is on career exploration and awareness, as well as developing applied learning skills through projects. The complete pathway at the high school level includes:

- ▶ 9th grade—service learning opportunities;
- ▶ 10th grade—job shadowing, field trips, unpaid internships;
- ▶ 11th grade—one-day per week of a paid work-based learning experience in a public, private or non-profit setting for students in STC SLCs;
- ▶ 12th grade—two-days per week of a paid work-based learning experience.

WORK-BASED LEARNING FOR JUNIORS AND SENIORS:

- ▶ a one-day per week paid experience for juniors, extending to two-days per week in the senior year;
- ▶ a work-based learning agreement that uses the district's cross-cutting School-to-Career competencies as the framework for learning, involving parents, teachers, students and the employer;
- ▶ projects that integrate academic and vocational curriculum;
- ▶ completion of the interview and selection process;
- ▶ designation of a trained mentor who helps create and guide each student's learning plan;
- ▶ exposure to a range of career pathways, extending beyond the scope of a particular site; and
- ▶ participation in an assessment process, including: self-reflection, work samples, work site evaluation, project materials and task analyses from supervised work experiences and tests.

IMPACT

In 1992, the school district established Philadelphia's first work-based learning program with the creation of a Manufacturing Apprenticeship Program for 12 juniors and seniors. By 1997/98, the Office of Education for Employment had forged partnerships with over 250 private, non-profit and public sector employers to create over 2,000 work-based learning positions for juniors and seniors*. The Office of Education for Employment provides the following data from the 1995/96 school year, reflecting student outcomes in work-based learning programs:

- ▶ the school attendance rate for work-based learning juniors and seniors was 87.8 percent, compared with 76.3 percent for the district;
- ▶ the graduation rate for work-based learning seniors was 97.6 percent, compared with 85.8 percent for the district; and
- ▶ the drop out/withdrawal rate for work-based learning students was .6 percent, compared to 9.01 for district-wide juniors and seniors;
- ▶ the GPAs for paid work-based learning students were higher than the district averages, with 28.7 percent of work-based learning students receiving GPAs of 3.0 or above, compared with 19.7 percent district-wide.

1997-98 goal: 3,500 WBL Placements

1996-97 stats - attached